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ABSTRACT

Although coordination among programs funded by the U.S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare (HEW) is occurring, it can be improved by removing barriers and specifying what is to be coordinated and how. HEW's National Coordination Study telephoned 187 agency personnel at federal and local levels in 54 HEW programs and talked in-person to 50 Seattle-area local agencies. The conversations covered the intent of statutes or regulations mandating coordination, the extent of and barriers to present coordination, and recommendations or additional needs for coordination. Among the study's conclusions were that (1) much coordination already occurs at the local level mainly to improve services; (2) federal coordination mandates have no effect, positive or negative, on actual coordination activities because they do not specify the functions or agencies to be coordinated; and (3) barriers to coordination include agency competition over "turf," lack of organizational staff or resources, and federal policy rigidity or mismatching in funding, eligibility, timing, and administration. To ameliorate these problems HEW should specify in its coordination mandates the functions, agencies, and activities to be coordinated; identify a coordination contact point in each regional office; offer special coordination incentive funding; and reform policies that are rigid or promote mismatched activities. (RW)

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THE CURE-ALL THAT SOMETIMES WORKS

HEW
NATIONAL COORDINATION STUDY
MARCH, 1978

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEW
REGION X OFFICE OF PLANNING & EVALUATION

EA 013 515

D R A F T

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FOREWORD

A FAIRY TALE

Once upon a time the Grand Bureaucrat In Power (commonly referred to as the Grand BIP) assembled all his Great Underlings With Less Power (GULPs) to understand the turmoil of our times.

First, the Grand BIP called on the GULP of Hunger who explained that even to make the lowly hamburger it was necessary to bring the wheat to the baker, then the cow to the tomato, and the relish to the roll. On and on he went and everyone looked at their shoes becuase the problem was indeed a difficult one.

Then the GULP of Housing was called upon and explained how building a house was bringing the hammer to the nail and the nail to the board, the paint to the brush, and the mortar to the stone. And everyone looked at the walls because this was indeed a difficult problem.

Then each of the GULPs in turn was called upon and explained that this or that could not get done because this or that could not be brought here or there with him or her. And everyone looked hither and thither in the room in recognition of the great problems before them.

Finally, the GULP of Wisdom identified the commonality of these problems. He noted that in no case was the problem single, but in every case it was multiple, involving several people, places, and things. THE PROBLEM, he declared, was COORDINATION.

"Ah", everyone said and went home to dinner, it being well reported that new wisdom increases the appetite.

THE END

INTRODUCTION

Coordination is as popular as parenthood and chocolate cake. It is revered as something always desirable and a serious obligation for spenders of tax dollars. It is often treated like a cure-all, a secret magic medicine believed to be the solution to every problem, whether administrative or programmatic, which arises in the delivery of services to people.

This study finds that 'coordination' is often, but not always, desirable in public programs. It commonly encompasses a set of quite real and easily understood activities. These activities may be good or bad depending on the public goals by which they are evaluated; they may be both good and bad at the same time. We find that local service deliverers do coordination extensively, while federal officials discuss it widely but don't support it very much.

Perhaps because coordination has been used to justify so many activities, many program personnel do not want any more of it and find it difficult to identify the benefits of coordination. This study finds, however, that coordination can be the softener of our categorical system, the glue in our multiple governmental structure and the humanizer of public service. There are activities often called "coordination" which all levels of government could enhance in order to serve citizens better. These activities are not free, but they may be cost effective. If it is medicine and is to be cost effective, coordination should be promoted only when the symptoms it is to treat are well identified and understood.

After a brief discussion of the study scope and methodology, this report proceeds to document the above statements and to draw conclusions, as well as specific recommendations for HEW, in four steps:

Chapter I: The Current Extent of Coordination

What's happening in the real world, particularly at the service delivery level?

Chapter II: The Current Federal Role in Coordination

Is coordination mandated by statute?
What does HEW now do to promote coordination?
How well does it work, or why doesn't it?

Chapter III: Room for Improvement and Barriers Against It

What isn't happening and ought to?
What are the barriers?

Chapter IV: Summary of Findings of Recommendations: Toward a Future Federal Role

What should HEW do to enhance coordination, if anything? What needs to be fixed: statutes, regulations, practices?

Chapters I, II, and III begin with a short paragraph of "Highlights", for those too busy to worry about the niceties of detail and strength of the data. The basic findings and all recommendations are contained in Chapter IV.

THE STUDY AND ITS METHODOLOGY

The National Coordination Study was undertaken by the Office of Planning and Evaluation in Region X, Department of Health, Education, and Welfare (HEW), summer of 1977, to locate and understand the barriers, if any, to coordination in HEW-supported programs. For dealing with a wide variety of individuals with widely differing ideas of what coordination means, the following very broad definition was adopted:

> DEFINITION: Coordination is activity among organizations (or sub-units of organizations) beyond the basic functioning of any single organization.

Methodology

The statutes and regulations of fifty-four HEW programs representing thirty-seven percent of the HEW budget were researched and the characteristics of coordination requirements were tabulated. (See Appendix A for the list of programs researched.) In addition, the statutes and regulations of several Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) programs and one Department of Labor (DOL) program with which HEW programs could be expected to coordinate were analyzed. The literature of HEW studies and academic papers on coordination were also reviewed.

Since coordination efforts are often directed at "related" programs, the idea of "relatedness" in the Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance was investigated. From the listings of related programs in the Catalog, clusters of related programs were developed.

An effort was made to contact at least one person at each of the federal and local levels for each of the programs studied. One hundred and eighty -seven phone discussions were conducted with program personnel around the nation. Five major topics were raised in these discussions: (1) the intent of statutory and regulatory mentions of coordination, (2) the present extent of coordination, (3) barriers to coordination, (4) the need for additional coordination, and (5) recommendations for coordination.

Local contacts for these phone discussions were made through HEW regional offices; and while participants spoke at length about coordination in service delivery, most of these participants were several steps removed from the delivery of any services. As a contrast then, and in an effort to reach more directly into the realm of service delivery, in-person discussions were conducted with local agencies in the Seattle area. Fifty local agencies, representing at least two agencies from each cluster, were involved in these discussions.

Throughout the presentation of this data, contrasts and similarities will be noted between the results of phone discussions (i.e., discussions with phone participants) and in-person discussions (discussions

with in-person participants). Because discussions with some participants dealt with some aspects of coordination more than others, the number of mentions of particular points, issues, or topics varied considerably. To simplify presentation, all results will be presented as rounded percentages. For example, thirty-five percent of the mentions of barriers to coordination were turf and eleven percent of the mentions of reasons for seeking additional coordination were to provide more services. Conciseness and readability necessitates omitting the actuality that there were 295 mentions of barriers and only 120 mentions of the reasons for seeking additional coordination. Only when the total number of which a percentage is given is so small (less than fifty) that the percentage may be misleading, is the actual number associated with percentage included parenthetically.

CHAPTER I

THE CURRENT EXTENT OF COORDINATION

Highlights:

A great variety of coordination is reported, but there is little agreement as to what coordination is. Coordination may be bad as well as good.

Many meetings take place among local agencies in the name of improving service delivery.

Federal personnel are somewhat less aware of coordination than others. This is probably due to the structure of HEW and much other federal funding; funds are given to state and local agencies which largely, in their own way, fund programs.

Considerably less coordination is indicated among federal programs and among state programs than among local programs.

Many agenices offer a holistic approach to clients by offering multiple services and by referring clients. Over 75% of clients entering Seattle service agencies were referred by other agencies.

Local agencies are frequently unaware of their relationship to HEW.

Two themes emerge in discussions of present coordination efforts:

(1) Upgrading service delivery by improving the quality of service delivered and/or by increasing the number of services offered, and

(2) achieving administrative efficiency through joint planning and/or funding efforts, and consolidation of some administrative functions.

Coordination is Happening!

By anyone's definition, a great deal of coordination is happening at the service delivery level. This study found that, on the average, about seventy-five percent (median) of clientele seen by a local agency arrives by way of referral from another agency.

A great variety of coordination is reported across all programs and clusters. As such, coordination is not mysterious, hierarchical, or threatening; and coordination does seem to be undertaken as a way of responding to diverse needs.

Sixty-eight percent of in-person participants (32 out of 47 agencies responding) stated that their agencies attempt a holistic approach to seeing clients, in general, by offering a comprehensive range of services in-house or by referring clients to other agencies. The average agency has three or four departments (median) and offers four or five services (median). On the average, about seventy-five percent (median) of clientele seen by an agency arrives by way of referral.

In general, a holistic approach clearly transcends the idea of the clusters of programs suggested by the Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance. Seventeen agencies contacted in person (34%) offer diverse services clearly involving more than one program cluster (for example, child care as well as health services). However, some agencies undertake a "limited holistic" approach in that they offer a wide range of services within a given cluster of services.

Examples of Coordination

The following verified examples illustrate the great variety of activities called "coordination" by participants in this study. The wide range of goals addressed by such coordination is shown. What's "good" for one situation may not be "good" for another; nor is every form of coordination in compliance with the letter of federal rules.

Example 1: Joint Delivery of Service - Sharing Personnel and Facilities

A local council on Aging had nutrition money to buy food, but not for payment of staff. So they arranged with an established local day care center to dispense the food after it was bought.

Example 2: Statements of Agreement - Multi-purpose Intake Forms

In another situation, a memo of understanding was drawn up between WIN and Job Corps in which Job Corps provides training and WIN provides day care. Although there is an initial increase in work load, it is expected to decrease, and there will be no extra costs to either agency.

The same WIN group has an informal agreement with Employment Security and Welfare which eliminates a duplicative assessment process. Previously, a joint assessment done by Employment Security and Welfare before referring clients to CETA was duplicated by CETA. Now, the single Employment Security-Welfare assessment is accepted for those WIN clients applying for CETA positions.

Example 3: Joint Planning, Review and Advocacy - Sharing Information

Several children's services agencies are involved in coordinated efforts in providing and planning services for abused and neglected children. Child Protective Teams made up of representatives of law

enforcement, mental health, public health, social services agencies and schools are set up to review all cases and decide what services should be provided. Representatives of these same agencies also form State Advisory Committees which develop policy, share information, encourage legislation, find resources, and stimulate local interest.

Example 4: Limited-holistic Approach to Service; Contractual Agreements for Delivery of Services

A youth work-training agency contracts with the local school district for in-house teachers of academic and vocational subjects; has referral agreements with local vocational/technical training institutions for further education, and with local counselling centers for clients in need of in-depth counselling; and has a job placement service for clients who wish to go to work immediately after finishing the agency's program. The basic function of the agency is to assist the client in becoming employable by offering courses that will lead to a high school diploma or its equivalent (G.E.D.), as well as to provide training that is relevant to the local job market. Ancillary services are often needed and this agency attempts to see that those services are obtained.

Example 5: Coordination Through Competition - Joint Planning and Needs Assessment

Two agencies serving urban Chicanos are currently coordinating in order to improve and, if possible, expand services. The agencies deal with the same general client population, but embody somewhat different political philosophies - one describing itself as "radical", the other as "moderate". The differences in organizational philosophies, according to one agency head, has resulted in a greater accessibility of service to urban Chicanos and in more people being served by the two agencies than would have been served by one larger agency.

Despite the differences between these agencies and their clientele, there are many needs and interests in common. Thus, the agencies are coordinating needs assessment and planning efforts in order to insure that the service needs of the overall client group are met.

Example 6: Coordination in Violation of Regulation - Co-location of Services - Sharing of Personnel

Coordination activities in what began as a sports skills day camp in Indiana have come to provide a holistic service approach for migrant children. The administrator, who suggested that he knew little of the statutes and regulations governing the program money he received, has developed various formal and informal agreements with other private and government agencies to provide these services. Interns from the University Schools of Dentistry and Optometrics

provide checkups, screening and referral as part of degree requirements. School of Education students fulfill their practicums at the day camp, providing a free source of aides and teachers. Other teachers and camp aides are involved in the Department of Labor's SPEDY program, summer youth programs, and CETA teacher training programs.

In an effort to provide other than immediate education services, vocational education people from the local school district visit to talk about careers and set up field trips in the community. Arrangements have also been made with the Department of Defense education specialists to administer aptitude and interest tests to these children and provide counselling and encouragement in career education.

Reaching into the community, the local Health Department has set up a clinic on-site where migrant families live. The day camp works closely with the health nurse there in providing care for children and families.

Most costs for this program are covered by a contract with the State Department of Public Multi-Cultural, Multi-Lingual Education. Other needs, such as a bilingual speech therapy and day care for younger siblings, are not allowed under the present funding system. To provide for these needs, as well as work out a similar program, using the same facilities, for parents, a credit exchange and stay-in-school program with the schools in Texas (where the migrant children attend part of the year) has been arranged. The administrator suggests block grant funding with fewer restrictions on the services for which the money can be used would make such arrangements easier.

Example 7: Administrative Efficiency - Sharing of Personnel - Joint Planning

The State vocational education people in Vermont have an extensive coordination program at the administrative level. To eliminate duplication of service, personnel from the State Department of Vocational Education and the State Department of Corrections worked together to set up a federally-funded education lab. The State Department of Vocational Education has also worked with OEO, the Energy Commission, and a local industry to assist energy conservation and share personnel to train people for employment. Furthermore, the State Department of Vocational Education, State Employment Security, WIN, and local community groups share the development of vocational education operating procedures, personnel for training, and job placement. To make the best use of funds available for these programs, the State Department of Vocational Education and the State Office of Economic Development have been working on financial policy together.

Example 8: Coordination in Violation of Program Restrictions - Sharing of Personnel

A Regional Administrator who perceived excess caseloads in welfare intake temporarily assigned child abuse personnel to welfare tasks.

Example 9: Coordination Overcoming the Privacy Act - Joint Funding Personnel

A suggested solution to another legislative barrier, confidentiality, was mentioned by a local health service provider. Only limited access to information about crippled children was available because a school principal, in his interpretation of the Privacy Act and fear of a law suit, would not release necessary information on students. Children eligible under crippled children's programs are hard to identify despite the Child FIND project because school personnel hesitate to refer children without definite diagnosis. The solution, which is currently being worked out, is to contract a public health nurse to the school district for a nominal fee, thereby making him/her a legal school employee and entitled to see all information on all children in the school.

What is Coordinated

In telephone discussions, service delivery was the function most commonly mentioned as being coordinated (42%), followed by planning (26%), information dissemination (12%), and operating procedures (10%).

Table I-1

Functions Coordinated as Reported by Phone Participants

Function	Frequency	Percent
Service Delivery	98	42.0
Planning	61	26.0
Information Dissemination	28	12.0
Operating Procedures	25	10.0
Financial Management	19	8.0
Evaluation	2	1.0
Other	1	0.5
TOTAL	234	99.5

In-person participants indicated that each agency coordinates with respect to a variety of organizational functions. Fifty-two percent of the local agencies represented by these participants coordinate in planning; forty-eight percent in service delivery; and forty-eight percent in needs assessment. Most frequently coordination of these functions involves between one and two other agencies.

Table I-2

Functions Coordinated as Reported by In-Person Participants

Function Coordinated	Number of Agencies	% of 50
Planning	26	52
Service Delivery	24	48
Needs Assessment	24	48
Information Dissemination	19	38
Finance	19	38
Support Services	19	38
Policy Making	16	32
Evaluation	14	28
Operations Procedures	11	22
Record Keeping	11	22
Nothing	6	12

Why Coordinate?

Consistent with the emphasis on service delivery, improving service was most commonly given by phone participants as the reason for coordination (35%), followed by promoting efficiency (30%), and providing more service (15%). Improving service means upgrading the quality of service provided to clients without actually increasing the number of services provided. Providing more services means adding services to those already offered, serving more clients, or both.

Table I-3

Reasons for Coordination Which Has Occurred

Reason	Frequency	Percent
Improve Service	55	35.0
Promote Efficiency	48	30.0
Provide More Service	24	15.0
Achieve Holistic Approach	10	6.0
Fulfill Legal Mandates	9	5.5
Achieve Simplicity, Order	7	4.0
Protect Turf/Avoid Competition	2	1.0
Other	4	2.5
TOTAL	159	99.0

Who Coordinates?

Also consistent with the emphasis on service delivery, local agency with local agency was the most frequently mentioned level of coordination in phone discussions (32%). Coordination among federal agencies (19%) and among states (18%) was mentioned next most frequently.

Table I-4

Levels of Government at Which Coordination Has Occurred

Level(s)	Frequency	Percent
Local with local	81	32.0
Federal with federal*	49	19.0
State with state	46	18.0
State with local	31	12.0
Federal with local*	23	9.0
Federal with state*	22	8.5
Other	2	1.0
TOTAL	254	99.5

* The designation "federal" includes both Central Office and Regional Office activities.

How is Coordination Accomplished?

Meetings were the most frequent activity mentioned (26%), followed by sharing of personnel (12%) and referral (10%).

Table I-5

Frequency of Mentions of Coordination Activities

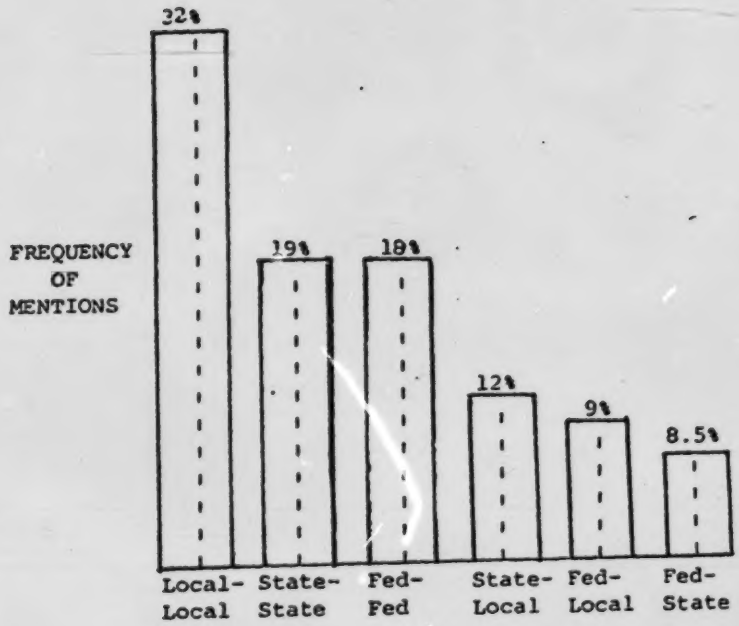
Activity	Frequency	Percent
Meetings	81	26.0
Share Personnel	37	12.0
Referral	32	10.0
Statements of Agreement	30	9.5
Share Funding	29	9.0
Share Information	32	10.0
Memo's	20	6.0
Share Facilities	17	5.0
Joint Review	19	6.0
Technical Assistance	10	3.0
Evaluation	7	2.0
Other	2	0.5
TOTAL	316	99.0

Feds Are Less Aware Of It

Thus, although coordination is extensive, the service environment is such that it is by-and-large a horizontal phenomenon occurring more at the local level than at other levels.

Table I-6

Level at (across) Which Coordination Has Taken Place
As Reported by Phone Participants (graphic form of Table I-4)



Furthermore, in-person discussions revealed little contact between federal personnel and local service deliverers. Of the twenty-four local agencies that indicated connections with HEW, only six considered that role to go beyond funding and the setting of eligibility requirements. Of the twenty local agencies to which HEW funds were traced, four did not know they received federal money.

In interpreting this data, it should be borne in mind how differently participants perceive coordination. In three cases, a participant suggested by his colleagues as being deeply involved in coordination activity saw himself as totally uninvolved.

The instances of coordination reported above were reported by participants at all levels of government with, however, slight differences. Fifteen percent of the federal participants in phone discussions said that they were not aware of any coordination, while only five percent of the non-federal participants said the same. To put this in perspective, note that coordination is generally thought of as taking place in service delivery - this function being mentioned most often and uniformly across all levels

of government in reference to the intent of statutes and regulations, instances of coordination, and needs for additional coordination. However, federal program administrators have little direct involvement in service delivery.

Table I-7

Number of Mentions of Instances of Coordination by Level of Participants

Number of Mentions	Federal*	State	Local
0	13	3	2
1	40	17	38
2	24	13	13
3	6	7	3
4+	1	3	4
Number of Participants...	84	43	60

*The designation "federal" includes both Central and Regional Office personnel.

Locals Do It

In-person discussions investigated coordination at the level of service delivery in the Seattle area and found it to be extensive.

Twenty-eight of the fifty in-person participants (56%) indicated that they were involved in the joint funding of inter-organizational activities. The average (median) joint funding operation involves three agencies.

Table I-8

Number of Agencies Involved in Specific Joint Funding Operations
(Including Responding Agency)

Number of Agencies Involved	Frequency
2	8
3	9
4	4
5	2
6	2
7	-
8	-
9	1
12	1
151*	1
Agencies Not Responding	22
TOTAL	50

*City of Seattle Department of Human Resources

Twenty-five of the fifty in-person participants (50%) mentioned joint staffing operations. The average (median) number of agencies involved in any one joint staffing operation being four.

Table I-9

Number of Agencies Involved in Specific Joint Staffing
(Including Responding Agency)

Number of Agencies Involved	Frequency
2	8
3	2
4	3
5	1
6	4
7	2
21	1
28	1
31	1
40	1
112*	1
Agencies Not Responding	25
TOTAL	50

* This is a large employment-training agency.

Of the fifty in-person participants, all but one indicated involvement with other agencies in the performance of day-to-day operations. This involvement is very broadly defined, including informal discussions among agency personnel as well as somewhat more formalized activities such as referral of clients. The average (median) number of agencies with which a given agency is involved in day-to-day operations is six.

Table I-10

Number of Agencies Involved in Miscellaneous Joint Activity
(Not Including Responding Agency)

Number of Agencies Involved	Frequency
0	1
1	1
2	7
3	2
4	6
5	5
6	5
7	3
8	4
9	4
10	2
11	3
12	2
13	1
16	1
17	1
18	1
20	1
TOTAL	50

CHAPTER II

THE CURRENT FEDERAL ROLE IN COORDINATION

Highlights:

Federal mandates are generally so vague as to be meaningless.

Federal mandates for coordination rarely provide for followup.

The benefits of such coordination can rarely be documented, but the costs are often obvious.

There is little incentive to coordinate.

It's The Law

At present, most federal mandates to coordinate are so vague as to be meaningless. Thirteen percent of programs studied contain mentions of coordination in the regulations but not in the statutes, 22% contain mentions of coordination in the statutes but not in the regulations, and 19% contain no mention of coordination in either statutes or regulations. While the remaining 43% of the programs which mention coordination in both statutes and regulations may represent considerable commitment to coordination, they are not at all equally specific in the coordination they require. In fact, 65% of them are vague.

Table II-1

Extent and Specificity of Coordination Mandates For Programs Originally Included in This Study

COORDINATION MANDATES IN BOTH STATUTES AND REGULATIONS ARE:	
1. Vague in Both Statutes and Regulations	65.0%
2. Vague in Statute, Specific in Regulation	28.0%
3. Specific in Both Statutes and Regulations	4.0%
4. Specific in Statutes, Vague in Regulations	3.0%

Table II-1a

Extent of Coordination Mandates for Programs Originally Included In This Study

COORDINATION MANDATES IN BOTH STATUTES AND REGULATIONS ARE:	
1. Mandated in Statutes, Not Regulations	22.7%
2. Not Mentioned At All	18.5%
3. Mandated in Regulations, Not Statutes	13.0%
4. Mixed (Different Functions Are Referenced in Statutes and Regulations)	3.7%

That is, in these cases, the statutes and regulations, taken together, fail to specify two of the four minimum components of coordination activity: (1) which agencies or governmental bodies are to coordinate, and (2) what functions are to be coordinated. A mention of coordination was taken to be specific if it indicated both of these two components. Two other components of coordination, (3) the reasons for coordinating, and (4) the specific activities that are to be undertaken, are important

for understanding coordination but were so rarely delineated in statutes or regulations as to be useless to tabulate.

The Perception of the Law

The vagueness of the references to coordination in the statutes and regulations is further substantiated by the general failure of study participants to specify the four minimum necessary components of coordination as outlined above.

Approximately half of the 187 phone participants did not specify the reasons for coordination; half did not specify which agencies were to coordinate; half failed to specify the functions to be coordinated. Nearly three-quarters of the administrators did not mention the activities that were to take place in the intended coordination. Thus, the statutes and regulations are vague; program administrator's conception of what they are to do is likewise vague.

Table II-2

. phone

Frequency/of Participant's Failure to Specify the Intent of Coordination in Statutes and Regulations

N = 187

Component	Number	Percent
Functions to be coordinated	86	46.0
Reason to coordinate	90	48.0
Agencies/Offices to coordinate	95	51.0
Activities to take place	132	71.0

The number of components of coordination mentioned by an administrator as being in the intent of the statutes or regulations did not differ much across the levels of government at which the official operated. Thus, officials at all levels of government seem to be equally familiar or unfamiliar with coordination mandates.

Table II-3

Perception of Functions Intended by Statute to be Coordinated

Function	Number	Percent
Service delivery	56	48.0
Financial management	15	13.0
Planning	16	14.0
Operating procedures	15	13.0
Information dissemination	8	6.0
Evaluation	6	5.0
Other	1	1.0
TOTAL	117	100.0

Forty-eight percent of the phone participants agree that coordination mandates are directed at the function of service delivery (Table I-3). However, as to the level at which coordination is to take place (Table I-5), there is little agreement except that eighty-one percent of phone/these participants felt that coordination should involve agencies who operate at the same level; that is, federal agencies with federal agencies, state with state, or local with local. Such coordination involves a great diversity of coordination activities to be undertaken (Table II-5).

While lines of disagreement are more clearly drawn, there is no overall agreement in the intended reason for coordination (Table II-4). Thirty-seven percent believe coordination is to promote efficiency while twenty-one percent believe it is to improve service, ten percent indicate it is to provide more service, and thirty percent see still other intents. Thus, for some, the emphasis is on maintaining the present level of service but providing less funding for it, while for others the emphasis is improving or expanding service with the realization that such efforts could likely involve additional funding. Abstractly, of course, these perceptions have a common meeting ground if efficiency could save money which would automatically be expended on service. However, the conflict of priorities is not to be ignored.

Table II-4

Perception of Reasons Intended by Statute to Coordinate

Reason	Number	Percent
Efficiency	52	44.0
Improve service	22	18.0
More service	12	10.0
Be legal	10	8.0
Simplicity	6	5.0
Avoid Competition	5	4.0
Total Commitment	4	3.0
Other	8	7.0
TOTAL	119	99.0

Table II-5

Agencies Intended by Statute to Coordinate

Agency	Number	Percent
Local-local	29	25.0
Federal-federal	25	21.0
State-state	27	23.0
State-local	13	11.0
Federal-state	11	9.0
Federal-local	9	8.0
Other	2	2.0
TOTAL	116	100.0

Table II-6

Perception of Coordination Activities Intended by Statute to be Undertaken

Activity	Number	Percent
Meetings	17	18.0
Statements of Agreement	12	13.0
Share information	12	13.0
Sharing personnel	7	8.0
Sharing funding	7	8.0
Joint review	11	12.0
Sharing facilities	6	6.0
Evaluation	6	6.0
Technical Assistance	4	4.0
Referral	4	4.0
Memo's	5	5.0
Other	3	3.0
TOTAL	94	100.0

Little Monitoring of Coordination

Furthermore, federally-mandated coordination, perhaps because it begins in vagueness, rarely provides for followup or monitoring. Thus, program personnel are generally free to interpret statutory and regulatory intent as they see fit. Only sixteen percent of the responding participants see monitoring as the function of a higher level of government; fifty-four percent see monitoring as a function at their own level; and thirty percent see monitoring of coordination as something those at a lower level of government should take care of.

Table II-7

Perceived Responsibility for Monitoring Coordination Frequency

Level of Government Responsible Relative to Level of Participant	Frequency	Percent
Own level	69	54.0
Lower level	38	30.0
Higher level	20	16.0
TOTAL	127	100.0

Thirty percent of the phone participants indicated they receive no more detailed information beyond the generally vague statutes and regulations.

Coordination Benefits and Incentives

The benefits of mandated coordination can rarely be documented. Only ten percent of the phone participants addressed the benefits of coordination, and those spoke only in very general terms of "improved communication" or being "better able to provide services". Two phone participants specifically said they received no benefits from coordination. Sixty percent of the in-person participants said coordination would probably not increase resources, either by promoting efficiency or for delivering services.

On the other hand, coordination mandates can result in obvious and burdensome costs in administrative overhead, staff time at meetings, transportation, or reporting functions. Lack of resources was mentioned second most frequently as a barrier to coordination, both in phone and in in-person discussions.

The federal government offers little or no incentive to coordinate. In fact, thirty-three percent of the in-person participants said coordination could lead to depletion of staff or staff time.

In terms of the incentive coordination itself might contain, there is little agreement as to the intent of the law. Thus, if compliance with

mandates is to be an incentive, disagreement concerning the intention behind those mandates could result in actual disincentive. For example, because the goals of efficiency and service improvements may well lead to different coordination activities, prospective coordinating agencies may well get activities thrust upon them whose effects are contrary to the interests which led them to seek coordination in the first place.

The Current Fervor to Coordinate

In considering whether coordination is a new need, this study compared the extent of the mention of coordination in statutes, both in terms of the number of mentions and in terms of the specificity of mentions, to the Congress in which the law was passed or amended, if amendments were relevant. The expectation was that more recently legislators have concerned themselves more with coordination. There is little evidence to support that expectation.

H_1: The more recent the passage of statute, the more mentions of coordination.

Kendall's Tau C (see note below)

.05

H_2: The more recent the passage of statute, the more specific the coordination mentions.

Kendall;s Tau C

.13

This investigation and the one which follows were limited in that all but one of the laws were passed since the 86th Congress in 1959. We proceeded, however, to also test the relation between the year in which a program was created and the legal coordination requirement for that program.

H_3: The more recent the Congress created the program the more the coordination required.

Keneall's Tau C

.07

Note: Kendall's Tau C was used here to indicate the extent of the association in the hypothesis. Kendall's Tau C is computed to be between -1 and 1. Values close to zero indicate weak

or non-existent relationships between variables, values close to 1 or -1 indicate strong relations. Negative values indicate inverse relations.

H_4: The more recent the Congress, the more specific the coordination.

Kendall's Tau C

.08

There is little evidence that more recent programs are more concerned with coordination.

Mandating Coordination Makes Little Difference

In the interest of assessing the importance of legal mandates for coordination, we investigated the relationship between measures of the extent of legal mandates for a given program and other measures abstracted from the phone discussions for that program. While the manner of selecting programs and study participants did not satisfy the conditions for statistical tests of significance, we posed the possible relationships in terms of hypotheses; for example, the more mentions of coordination in the statutes and regulations for a program, the more legislative intent for coordination would be perceived by study participants. A list of such hypotheses is included in Table I-8, along with a numerical assessment of the strength of the relationships hypothesized.

The expected relationships may be somewhat argumentative. Do we expect that programs with more mandates show more coordination because of the force of the mandates, or that programs with more mandates show less coordination because these are the programs which need such legal mandates because coordination was not occuring? In the latter case, one could go on to suggest that such programs might have participants who see a greater need for additional coordination.

Table II-8

Hypothesized Relations Between Characteristics of Coordination Mandates and Coordination Perceptions and Behaviors

Hypotheses Investigated	Kendall's Tau C
The greater the number of legal mandates to coordinate:	
H_1: the greater the extent of coordination reported	.07
H_2: the greater the perceived need for additional coordination	.03
H_3: the more extensive the perceived legislative intent	-.09
H_4: the more other documentation of coordination reported	.23
H_5: the more extensive are barriers to coordination reported	.09
H_6: the more coordination recommended reported	.06
The more specific the legal mandates to coordinate:	
H_7: the greater the extent of coordination reported	.06
H_8: the greater the perceived need for additional coordination	.05
H_9: the more extensive the perceived legislative intent	.09
H_{10}: the more other documentation of coordination reported	.24
H_{11}: the more extensive are barriers to coordination reported	.11
H_{12}: the more coordination recommended reported	.05
The more extensive the other documentation explaining coordination:	
H_{13}: the greater the extent of coordination reported	-.20
H_{14}: the greater the perceived need for additional coordination	-.17
H_{15}: the more extensive the perceived legislative intent	
H_{16}: the more extensive are barriers to coordination reported	.30
H_{17}: the more coordination recommended reported	.02

None of the relationships investigated seem to have any strength. Only a few relationships can claim any evidence at all and these rather weak. Some evidence suggests: the more mandates for coordination (similarly, the more specific the mandates), the more participants mention other documentation of coordination, indicating, perhaps, the thoroughness of program personnel in bureaucratic implementation of the law. Somewhat frightening might be the stronger relation: the more extensive the documentation, the more extensive the barriers reported (H_{16} of TableII-8).

Of similar interest is the relationship between the number of legal mandates for coordination and participants' perception of this legal intent. Indeed, however weak, the relationships between legal mandates, H_3, (similarly, other documentation received, H_9) and the participants' mention of legal intent are negative. This suggests that the more legal mandating for coordination, the less participants knew about or, at least, mentioned the intent of the law for coordination.

Local Perception of HEW Role in Coordination

The in-person discussions of the study yielded some interesting, though probably not statistically significant, information about the local perception of HEWs role in coordination - or, for that matter, in programs at all. Several in-person participants (agency directors) did not know what HEW was exactly, and four out of twenty agencies known to receive HEW funds (although indirectly) did not know whether they received HEW funds or not. The distance between HEW and the service delivery it supports must have implications for HEWs ability to promote coordination at the delivery level.

Table II-9

Perception of HEWs Roles in Local Service Delivery Agency
As Reported by In-Person Participants

	Frequency	Percent
No HEW Role	16	40
Limited Role:		
Indirect Funding	12	
Peripheral Info Dissemination	3	
Both: Some Indirect Funding & some Info Dissemination	3	
	18	45
Major Role:		
Major Funding	1	
Funding and Information	5	
	6	15
TOTAL	40	

CHAPTER III

ROOM FOR IMPROVEMENT AND BARRIERS AGAINST IT

Highlights:

Need is expressed for more coordination, particularly in the service delivery function, but the desire for more coordination is not universal.

There is some evidence of a need for greater federal-local coordination, though most support for coordination improvement is at the local level.

Participants want a shift away from meetings as the primary coordination activity toward shared information and shared funding.

Barriers to coordination are identifiable: turf, policy and organization.

Federal requirements are heavily implicated in the perceived barriers to coordination. Such requirements include categorical funding, conflicting and restrictive eligibility requirements, mismatched requirements, and mismatched administrative procedures.

Some individuals are overcoming all barriers to coordination.

Given conflicting goals, one person's coordination may be another's taboo.

Participants strongly recommend improved information/communication systems and clarification of policy goals. Opinion on stronger federal coordination mandates is mixed.

More Coordination Needed

Despite the relatively positive findings of Chapter I, participants in the study felt strongly that additional coordination is needed. They discussed in considerable detail the (a) functions needing more coordination, (b) governmental levels at which more coordination is needed, (c) purposes of additional coordination, and (d) specific coordination activities which should be strengthened. The results of these discussions with phone participants are presented below in Tables III, 1-5. Very similar results were recorded from the in-person interviews as well.

Service delivery is not only the most common point of current coordination activities, but also the function most often mentioned as the desired

point of more coordination - in other words, more of the same is needed. Planning and information dissemination were mentioned next most frequently.

In discussing who should coordinate, participants continued to stress coordination at their own level, i.e., the local level, for the most part. Coordination between federal and state agencies is a rather low priority for both federal and state participants. Comparing coordination levels needed with those now prevalent (Table III-3) it appears that the interest in additional local-local coordination is smaller than the pattern of existing local-local coordination, suggesting (as many participants suggested outright) that there is already extensive local-local coordination, possibly straining resources. On the other hand, federal-local coordination is asked for more frequently than it occurs, indicating that present federal-local coordination may not be sufficient.

The reasons for additional coordination most commonly mentioned were two: (1) improving service (36%), and (2) promoting efficiency (35%). The next most frequently mentioned purpose was: providing more service (11%).

Activities most needing more coordination are information-sharing (21%), followed by fund-sharing (12%), and then by meetings (11%). This appears to represent a desire to shift away from meetings as the primary coordination activity, the position which "meetings" hold in current practice. (See Table III-)

Finally, it should be noted that the expressed wish for additional coordination, while strong, is by no means universal. Seventy-three out of 187 phone participants (39%) mentioned no need for additional coordination. Ten out of fifty in-person participants (20%) specifically indicated no need for additional coordination; another seven chose not to discuss additional coordination at all.

Table III-1

Number of Mentions of Additional Coordination by Phone Participants

(Each number is for a mention of a discrete suggestion for additional coordination)

	Number of Discrete Suggestions of Additional Coordination				
Agency	0	1	2	3+	Total
Central Office	23	17	3	-	43
Regional Office	18	17	4	2	41
Total Federal	41	34	7	2	84
State	10	26	6	1	43
Local	22	28	7	3	60
TOTAL	73	88	20	6	187

Table III-2

Functions Mentioned in Discussions of the Need for Additional Coordination

Function	Frequency	Percent
Service delivery	58	44
Planning	20	15
Information dissemination	20	15
Operating procedures	15	11
Financial management	13	10
Evaluation	4	3
Other	1	1
TOTAL	131	99

Table III-3

Level of Needed Additional Coordination by Level of Participant

Level of Participant	Local-Local	Fed-Fed	Fed-Local	State-State	State-Local	Fed-State	Other	TOTAL
Federal	7	21	11	2	3	5	0	49
State	7	7	3	14	3	6	0	37
Local	25	1	5	1	8	1	1	42
Other	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	2
TOTAL	39	30	19	18	14	12	1	133

(Numbers represent mentions of additional coordination at the proposed level.)

Table III-4

Reasons for Additional Coordination

Reason	Frequency	Percent
Improve service	43	36.0
Promote efficiency	42	35.0
Provide more service	13	11.0
Promote simplicity/order	9	7.5
Achieve total commitment of resources	6	5.0
Fulfill legal mandates	2	2.0
Avoid competition	1	1.0
Protect turf	1	1.0
Other	3	2.5
TOTAL	120	101.0

Table III-5

Additional Coordination Activities

Activity	Frequency	Percent
Share information	30	21.0
Share funding	17	12.0
Meetings	15	11.0
Referral	14	10.0
Memos	11	8.0
Statements of Agreement	12	8.5
Share personnel	12	8.5
Joint review	9	6.0
Share facilities	9	6.0
Technical assistance	6	4.0
Evaluation	3	2.0
Other	3	2.0
TOTAL	141	99.0

Coordination Barriers: Turf, Policy, Organization

Participants expressed a wide range of convictions as to the barriers which stand in the way of greater coordination. The variety of barriers mentioned can be classified as (a) "turf" barriers, (b) policy barriers, (c) organization barriers, and (d) miscellaneous barriers. These are described as follows:

(a) Turf-related Barriers

Turf: Protection of or competition for resources and/or clients.

Different philosophies: Different agencies view problems, and therefore the methods of solving those problems, in different and sometimes conflicting ways.

(b) Policy Barriers

Rigidity/Restrictions:

Conflicting eligibility requirements: One agency's target population may not be eligible for another agency's services despite the fact that such services are necessary or desirable.

Funding rigidity: Program funds can only be used to fund specific services. This can be a barrier if agencies want to jointly fund a service not authorized by either.

Excessive restrictions: This may also refer to funding rigidity, such as co-mingling funds, but could include reference to eligibility requirements or other limits on program activity.

Other legislated barriers: This pertains to restrictions placed on agency activities. Examples - (1) Certain job-training programs are legislatively prohibited from putting to work in the private sector; (2) WIN clients cannot be de-registered unless, despite CETA Title VI, they are placed in full-time unsubsidized jobs.

Mismatches:

Mismatched program cycles: Planning the coordinated use of resources from different programs is difficult if program startups do not coincide.

Mismatched reporting/monitoring requirements: Agencies with different reporting requirements find it difficult to exchange information for meaningful planning (e.g., single agencies meeting different reporting requirements from different programs complain of excessive burden).

Mismatched laws: Laws authorizing similar programs for similar target populations are not consistent with respect to services authorized, administrative procedures, etc.

Different funding mechanisms: This generally refers to the difficulty of coordinating formula grant programs with project programs.

Program fragmentation: There are too many programs authorized by federal and state governments, each program dealing with too small a part of client needs.

(c) Organizational Barriers

Lack of time
Lack of staff
Lack of money: Lack of time, staff, or money may reflect funding scarcity in some program areas and hence be inter-organizational, and may reflect an agency's internal allocation of resources and hence be intra-organizational.

Lack of information: Agencies may not know in sufficient detail what other agencies are doing, what resources are available, or how to get them.

Mismatched organizations: Especially in mandated coordination, functions to be performed by different agencies or the authority of each agency is not defined.

Definition problems: Agencies providing similar services define their target populations in slightly different ways. This is, in some ways, similar to conflicting eligibility requirements but occurs mostly prior to the setting of eligibility requirements.

No funding incentives: Staff members who get involved in initiating or implementing coordination may have less time for other program activities or may go beyond the usual work day without compensation.

(d) Miscellaneous Barriers

Confidentiality: Interagency exchange of information may violate client confidentiality.

Cumbersome bureaucracy: Some agencies find the bureaucracy difficult to deal with simply because of the red tape involved.

Of the nearly 300 telephone comments pertaining to barriers, only one was that there were no barriers to achieving coordination, whereas the responding in-person participants said there were no barriers. Despite this great difference in perceiving no barriers, there are similarities among the barriers actually mentioned. The two most mentioned impediments to coordination, turf and lack of resources, are the same for both groups.

Table III-6

BARRIERS MENTIONED BY PHONE PARTICIPANTS

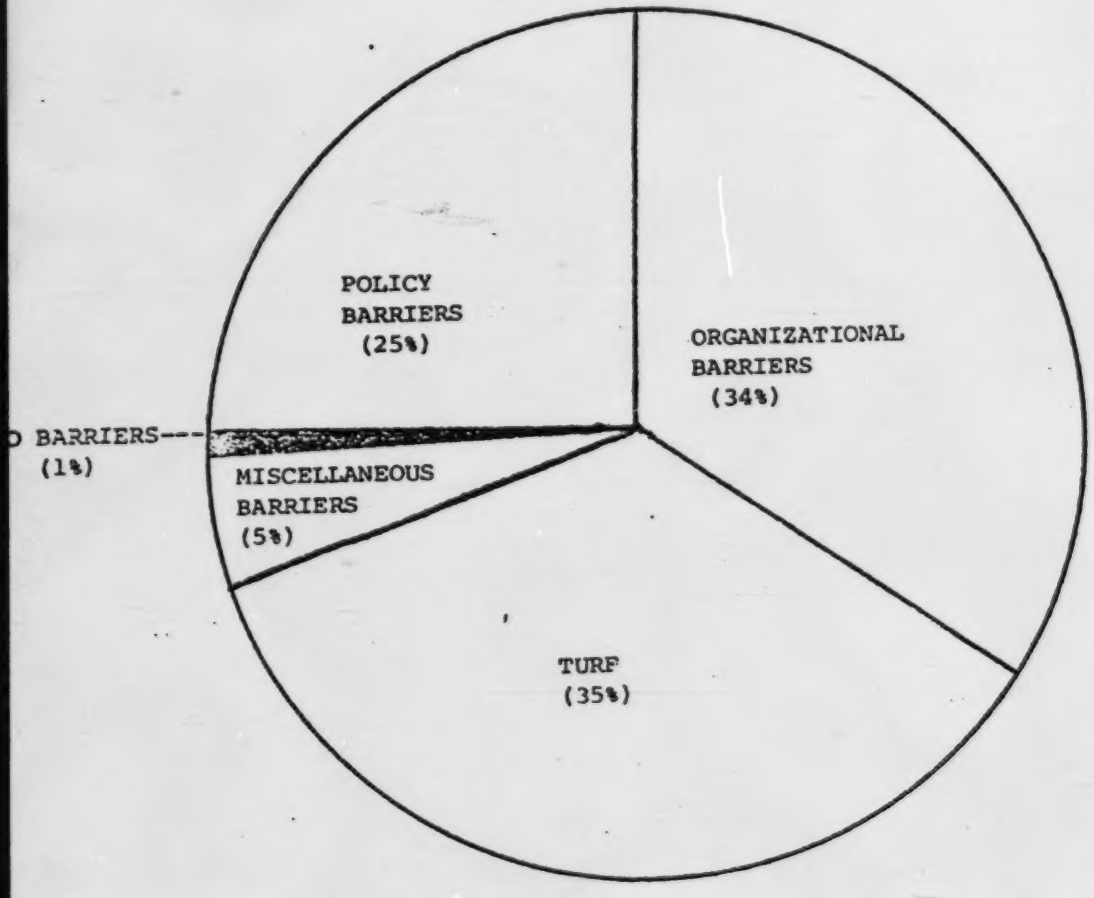


Table III-7

BARRIERS MENTIONED BY IN-PERSON PARTICIPANTS

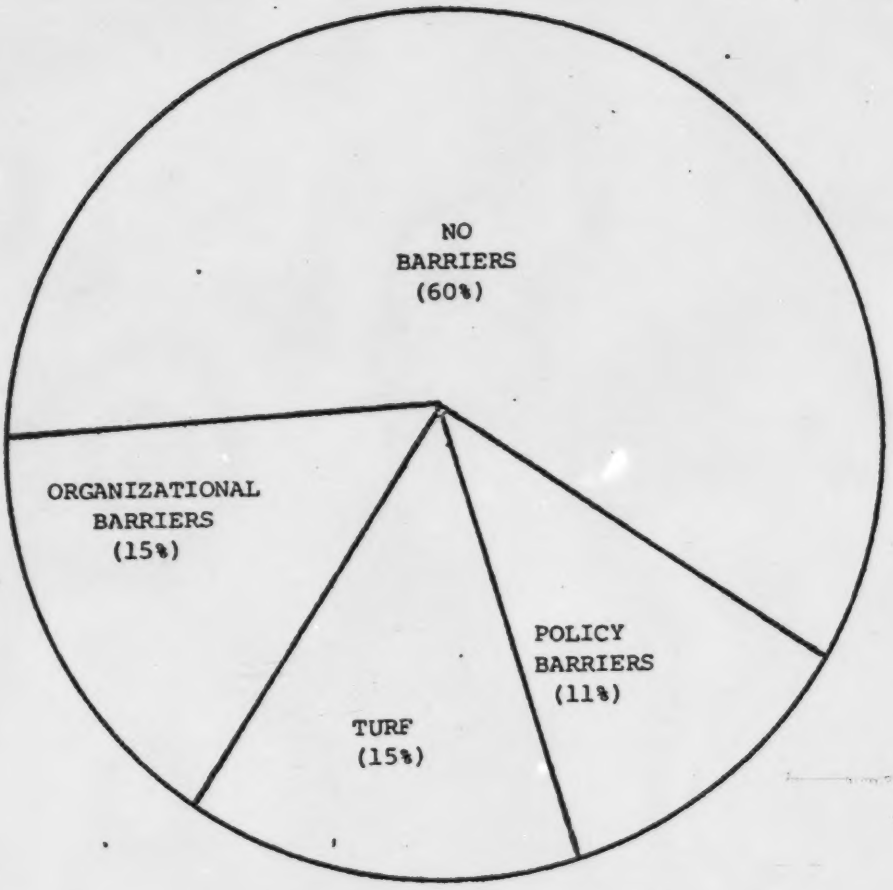


Table III-8

BARRIERS MENTIONED

Barrier	# Phone Mentions	# In-Person Mentions
Turf-related Barriers		
Turf protection	86	7
Different organizational philosophies	17	1
SUB-TOTAL	103	8
Organizational Barriers		
Lack of money	24	2
Lack of staff	22	1
Lack of time	17	1
Lack of information	19	2
Mismatched organizations	14	0
Definition problems	8	1
No funding incentives	1	1
SUB-TOTAL	105	8
Policy Barriers		
Rigidity/restrictions:		
Conflicting eligibility	18	1
Funding rigidity	8	0
Excessive restrictions	7	1
Other legislated	9	2
Mismatches:		
Mismatched program cycles	10	1
Mismatched reporting/monitoring	7	0
Mismatched funding mechanisms	4	0
Program fragmentation	3	0
Mismatched laws	5	0
SUB-TOTAL	71	5
Miscellaneous Barriers		
Confidentiality	6	0
Cumbersome bureaucracy	9	0
SUB-TOTAL	15	0
No Barriers	1	32
NUMBER OF BARRIER MENTIONS	294	21
TOTAL	295	53

Number of phone participants not responding - 17
Number of in-person participants not responding - 2

Other Problems

Although not addressed specifically as barriers, in-person participants also discussed problems actually encountered when trying to obtain services for their clients from other agencies. Twenty-one percent indicated they encountered such problems. Most frequently mentioned specific problems were: turf protection (17%), lack of money (17%), lack of information (15%), and mismatched eligibility requirements (11%).

Table III-9

Problems (Barriers) Encountered by In-Person Participants When Trying to Obtain Services From Other Agencies

Problem		Frequency
1. Policy Barriers		
Conflicting eligibility		6
Excessive restrictions		2
Funding rigidity		1
Mismatched reporting/monitoring		1
Mismatched program cycles		1
	SUB-TOTAL	11
2. Turf-related Barriers		
Turf protection	SUB-TOTAL	9
3. Organizational Barriers		
Lack of money		9
Lack of information		8
Lack of time		3
Lack of staff		3
Lack of communication		3
	SUB-TOTAL	26
4. Miscellaneous Barriers		
Geographic/Transportation difficulties		2
No service available		2
Cumbersome bureaucracy		2
Confidentiality		1
Excessive waiting lists		1
	SUB-TOTAL	8
5. None		14
	TOTAL	68

Discussion of Barriers

Overview

Policy barriers - barriers over which HEW has most direct control and may be best able to address - comprise between twenty and twenty-five percent of

barriers mentioned. These are the barriers most often discussed in other studies.

However, the frequency with which people mentioned organizational barriers, such as the lack of agency resources or lack of information (35%-36% of barriers mentioned) suggests that HEW might well address coordination through increased funding and through collection and dissemination of information. Addressing organizational barriers in this way might also help mitigate the effects of turf-protection.

One Person's Barrier is Another Person's Bridge

While turf protection is an obviously significant barrier, the existence of separate special interests for similar agencies is not always seen as a negative aspect of inter-agency relationships. Some people stated that the competition resulting from turf-protection, as when agencies are competing for the same clientele and/or resources, is actually beneficial in that it keeps agencies on their toes. Also, when one agency's protection of its own turf does not seriously threaten another agency's viability, the existence of separate but related spheres of activity can serve to enhance inter-agency coordination and hence enhance service delivery. This latter condition is exemplified by the two agencies serving urban Chicanos cited in the section on the present extent of coordination. The philosophical differences between these two agencies has created definite turfdoms. Yet, the value of having two smaller agencies instead of one larger agency is recognized by both; and, in spite of each agency's commitment to its turf, these two agencies are now combining efforts in planning for the needs of urban Chicanos and in delivering certain services.

One Person's Fragmentation is Another Person's Resource

Actually, the categorical structure of federal funding can be seen as the result of turf protection, specific groups demanding specific types of federal assistance, and this may cause the appearance of duplication of effort through agency or program fragmentation at the local service delivery level. However, neither program nor agency fragmentation is as extensive as might be inferred from the Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance. Approximately thirty percent of all phone participants had authority in more than one program. Twenty-four percent of the Central Office personnel had authority in more than one program, with the corresponding percentages of 33%, 36% and 31% for regional federal, state and local participants, respectively.

Seventy-three percent of the agencies contacted in person received funds from more than one source, suggesting that those agencies deliver services under more than one program authorization and that delivery of services in this way cuts across the categories defined by the federal categorical funding. Therefore, consolidation at the Central Office level may have limited consequences where consolidation is already achieved at the regional, state, and local levels.

One Person's Coordination is Another's Taboo

Consolidation at the service delivery level is already widespread. Mega-agencies, such as Washington State Department of Social and Health Services, King/Snohomish Manpower Consortium, Washington State Department of Education, were created to be major consolidating and/or coordinating forces. In fact, they also serve as barriers to coordination in some instances. In general, the state or local regional governmental body designated as the mega-agency for a set of services (social and/or health, employment, education, etc.) deals only with the sub-agencies that fall within its organizational structure. These sub-agencies may be units of local government or sub-contractors. Private, non-profit service delivery organizations, therefore, have found it increasingly difficult to obtain Federal Formula Grant funds and interact with those agencies who through the mega-agencies, do receive these funds. As a result of this, these private, non-profit agencies have become increasingly isolated around private granting organizations, such as United Way, and on special federal project grants. Thus, if coordination among local agencies occurs, it tends to be within at least two separate groups: among public agencies and among clusters of private, non-profit agencies; but generally not between the public and private non-profit agencies.

Two of the people with whom in-person discussions were held recommended that the mega-agency concept be abandoned. These two, both working for private, non-profit agencies and dealing with separate mega-agencies, recommended that the federal funding process should eliminate the state as a middleman. However, that this recommendation did not occur more often implies, perhaps, that it is not the mega-agency per se that impedes coordination but the manner in which these agencies are currently operating. The recent panel report on the statewide social and health umbrella agency in Washington State notes this minority opinion with a similar disclaimer to that presented here.

That individuals can be found who are overcoming all so-called barriers to coordination suggests that there are no conditions that are absolute, universal barriers to coordination. However, a condition that might have little effect on some agencies' attempts to coordinate may well render coordination impossible for others. Thus, many barriers to coordination are indigenous to very specific situations and overly general solutions may waste resources and create new barriers.

Coordination Recommendations of Participants

Besides the current extent of coordination, need for additional coordination, and barriers in the way of improved coordination, participants also discussed many recommendations for improved coordination. These have been classified into more limited lists of recommendations presented in the following tables.

Table III-10

Recommendations From Phone Discussions - In Order of Frequency of Response

	Recommendation	Number of Mentions
1.	Access to better information	28
2.	Better communication between agencies	18
3.	Mandate coordination more specifically in Statutes and Regulations	14
4.	Clarify goals for coordination	15
5.	Loosen program restrictions	11
6.	Consolidate similar programs	10
7.	Provide more program funds	10
8.	Provide more program personnel	9
9.	Increase local autonomy	8
10.	Eliminate targeting of funds	6
11.	Place similar programs under same authority	5
12.	Provide more technical assistance	6
13.	Have similar eligibility requirements for similar programs	4
14.	Remove joint funding complications	3
15.	Provide funding incentives	3
16.	Co-locate similar program personnel	2
17.	Formalize coordination activities	2
18.	Eliminate State as middleman	2
19.	Match program cycles	1
20.	Other	25
	TOTAL	184

Table III-11

Recommendations From In-Person Discussions - In Order of Frequency of Response

	Recommendation	Number of Mentions
1.	Access to better information/centralized information	18
2.	Increase local autonomy and/or involvement	6
3.	Provide more staff/staff time for coordination	5
4.	Loosen program restrictions	4
5.	Provide more technical assistance	4
6.	HEW should not try to coordinate between agencies	4
7.	Better communication between agencies	4
8.	Require similar reporting, monitoring, application process	3
9.	Mandate more specific coordination	3
10.	Provide more program funds	3
11.	HEW should monitor clients	3
12.	Eliminate State as middleman	2
13.	Provide funding incentive to coordinate	2
14.	Place similar programs under similar authority	1
15.	Require similar eligibility for similar programs	1
16.	Consolidate similar programs	1
17.	Match program cycles	1
18.	Specify funds for specific target populations	1
19.	Other	6
	TOTAL	72

Discussion of Participant Recommendations - Information/Communication

1. The most common recommendation made by phone participants was for better information (15%) and the second most frequently mentioned recommendation was for better communication (10%). The in-person participants placed even greater importance on access to better information; the most common recommendation in eighteen out of forty-three agencies (42%). Also mentioned by in-person participants were the needs: (1) for more technical assistance, and (2) for better communication among service providers and between HEW and service providers (four out of forty-three, or 9% each).

   The need for better information represents three basic communication problems: (a) information flow within HEW, (b) information flow between HEW and service providers, and (c) information flow among service providers.

   a. Information Within HEW

      In producing this study, locating and putting into perspective the many other studies on coordination was time consuming. Some reviewers may note conspicuous omissions. HEW personnel, however, are not generally aware of the activities undertaken and lessons learned

by other personnel. For example, in the time allowed the study, a HEW person could not be found who was familiar with Litwak's significant study on coordination, conducted with funds from a 1972 HEW grant. HEW mandates for coordination, in their continuing vagueness, seem to completely disregard other failures and input of previous experiences.

b. Information Flow Between HEW and Service Providers

HEW regulations, eligibility requirements and procedures are generally promulgated in the absence of input from clients or service providers. A common complaint is that the needs of clients and/or service providers are not taken into account in planning or formulation of policy and that little effort is made to inform them about regulations, funding opportunities, or other new developments. Twenty-one out of forty-eight in-person participants (43%) said that their needs were not fed into the planning processes that allocate resources. This was even mentioned by people who sat on regional or statewide advisory committees.

c. Information Among Local Service Providers

Local service providers need up-to-date information on what other agencies are doing. Among the in-person participants, fourteen out of forty-eight (29%) count referral among the primary service they offer and good information is necessary for maintaining a good referral process. At least three agencies were mentioned in the in-person discussions whose primary funding is for keeping referral files of agencies and the services they offer. These files do not agree with one another. In fact, a competitive component was brought to light including the allegation that some agencies have been specifically excluded from one set of files and from the referrals resulting from the use of those files. This situation may well be the result of turf battles among local agencies.

These files generally are organized from information provided by participating agencies using their own taxonomy of services. Local efforts have been made to provide taxonomies but not in universally acceptable ways, so that agency personnel can have difficulty in locating services outside the group of agencies with which they are personally familiar.

Federal Coordination Mandates

2. Almost all participants were generally responsive to coordination but a significant percentage said "No more." Those interested in coordination do not have a common definition for coordination and disagree on how HEW can make coordination more likely to happen. Eleven percent of the suggestions put forth by phone participants were for increasing the federal government's role in effecting coordination (recommendations 3, 15, and 17 in Table III-10). On the other hand, fifteen percent of

these suggestions were for decreasing federal presence in these activities (recommendations 5, 9, 10 and 14 of the same Table).

This ambiguity is also evidenced by suggestions put forth by in-person participants. Thirty-five percent (15 out of 43) of the in-person participants offered suggestions which would require more federal presence (recommendations 5, 8, 11, and 13 in Table III-11). Conversely, thirty-two percent (14 out of 43) of these participants suggested less federal presence (recommendations 2, 4, and 6 in Table III-11).

No pattern emerges in this data as to which programs, or even which clusters, warrant action. Indeed, the suggested approach may vary from locale to locale or person to person with a cluster. In choosing an approach to increasing coordination, HEW must take care not to interpret the cry for coordination as a general justification for any specific approach. For example: federal mandates for coordination have generally initiated inter-agency meetings. Seventy-six out of 294 phone participants identified coordination activites as meetings. This was the most frequent response. However, twenty-two out of thirty responding in-person participants (73%) indicated they have enough meetings already; implying more would strain their resources.

Goal Conflicts

3. Participants expressed concern about the clear transmission of federal goals through state agencies to local providers of service. Problems with "middle-man" organizations were mentioned frequently in in-person discussions. One source of confusion regarding goals may well be the policy authority the federal government has shared with administrative agencies.

   The following anecdotes exemplify this problem issue:

   a. A Washington resident and client of HEW-related services complained to HEW that day care expenses should be treated as work-related for purposes of eligibility in mega-agency HEW-sponsored programs. In fact, HEW-DOL joint policy at that time already specified day care as work-related and the consolidated agency had instituted its own policy contrary to federal intent. All parties now agree that this is the situation; but ten months have elapsed with the HEW-DOL policy not implemented locally. The rearrangement of priorities and policy by the consolidated agency is a kind of coordination, possibly intended to strengthen service funds, but it does not necessarily further national goals.

      Program personnel, in such matters, monitor compliance from the files of the agency whose compliance is in question but, generally, only when a problem is brought to its attention. Neither of these monitoring features is adequate. Refusals of eligibility were mostly accomplished without records created in the files, by phone, or in personal interviews, and citizens cannot be expected to be thoroughly familiear with laws, policies, or the inroads of the present federal custom.

b. A local employer of the handicapped reports that job applicants are sent to the consolidated agency for reasons of training reimbursements and they frequently never return. The jobs available to them must be given to non-handicapped job seekers in order to fill production contracts. The consolidated agency chooses to send handicapped people to education or other programs not specifically directed toward employment. Strong policy and turf issues are reflected by this anecdote, which reveals confusion over goals.

c. The National Institutes for Mental Health (NIMH) emphasizes successful treatment in evaluation of mental health agencies, while the state umbrella agency (DSHS in Washington State), partly through pressures of HEW funding, mandates treatment of severely distrubed and low income. At the same time, mental health agencies fall under the authority of both and remain heavily dependent on fees. There are clear policy conflicts here, and clearer goals are needed.

Providing More Resources for Coordination

Nineteen suggestions by phone participants (10%) mentioned the need for more resources to accomplish coordination (recommendations 7 and 8 in Table III-10). Five out of forty-three in-person participants (12%) recommended more staff for coordination.

Planning Boards - Committees

Directors of local service agencies are commonly on many state or regional advisory boards. Thus, in many cases, the machinery for including local needs in the planning process already exists. These board members often feel that no one is interested in their advice. The need here is to have the many coordination mandates reinterpreted so as to call for compliance of citizen participation in fact, rather than just in form. Monitoring of this would form a part of monitoring described above.

Eligibility Requirements

Ten percent of the suggestions put forth by phone participants relate to coordination problems induced by eligibility requirements (recommendations 6, 11, and 13 in Table III-10). Three of the forty-three responding in-person participants made similar suggestion (recommendations 14, 15, and 16 in Table III-11). While there does seem to be a need to investigate problems caused by eligibility requirements, local discussions indicate that eligibility requirements are not universally viewed as barriers to coordination. They represent an attempt by government to set aside resources for the needs of certain target populations. However, they can be troublesome, especially when they are complicated and seem capricious to local service providers. This underscores the need for some explanation mentioned in the paragraphs in information/communication above.

Moreover, eligibility requirements create gaps in service when prospective clients do not fit the eligibility descriptions for populations identified with similar needs. Thus, some child care services are available only for specific geographic urban areas. Individuals on the fringes of that area may need those services too. These needs must be fed into the planning process. Local providers are aware of target populations overlooked in eligibility specifications and HEW could respond to these needs if it received the relevant information in a timely fashion.

CHAPTER IV

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS: TOWARD A FUTURE FEDERAL ROLE

The following 15 points summarize the findings of this study and will serve as a basis for the discussion which follows and the recommendations which are made.

A distinction is drawn between RECOMMENDATIONS and IMPROVEMENT IDEAS. Recommendations are more general and comprise policy issues which flow directly from the findings of the study and are, the authors, feel, fully justified on the basis of the data presented. Improvement ideas are more specific actions which might be taken to ameliorate problems or barriers identified in the report or to promote coordination in certain circumstances. They relate only indirectly to the study data and represent solutions or partial solutions which individual study participants or study staff have proposed.

Both recommendations and improvement ideas will, it is hoped, be the subject of debate occasioned by this draft report. Depending upon the scope and variety of comment received on this draft, a consolidated set of recommendations, both general and specific, may be presented in a finalized report.

CHAPTER IV

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS OF RECOMMENDATIONS: TOWARD A FUTURE FEDERAL ROLE

Summary of Findings:

1. Much coordination is already occurring, particularly at the local service provider level, and especially in the form of referral of clients between agencies.

2. Coordination is not always recognized as such. Providers and administrators tend to connect it heavily with "meetings", for which they'd prefer to substitute more shared information and shared funding.

3. The primary purpose of coordination, both current and desired, is in service delivery: expanding/improving services and the efficiency with which services are delivered.

4. There is a detectable feeling of isolation from HEW on the part of local service providers, and some interest in stronger federal-local information sharing. Some local providers don't even know when some of their funding comes from HEW. Many view the State as a "middle-man", not always favorably.

5. This has a factual basis. Three-fourths of HEW funds are direct transfer payments to individuals. Of the remainder, half goes to States as formula grants. Another 9% goes exclusively to private, non-profit providers and researchers. States, local governments, and private agencies compete for the remaining 41% of non-transfer funds (i.e., remaining 10% of all HEW funds).

6. In two-thirds of the programs studied the statutes mandate coordination. Of the remaining one-third, roughly half require coordination by regulation, while the other half (or 1/6th of the total) do not require coordination at all.

7. In those programs which require coordination by both statute and regulation, two-thirds do not specify which organizations and which functions are to be coordinated. Purposes for coordination and activities to be coordinated are virtually never specified in either statutes or regulations for any program.

8. Few study participants were aware of any monitoring of coordination at any level. Few could identify any coordination incentives from higher levels of government.

9. There is strong - though not universal - desire for improved coordination. Most of this is for local-local coordination, mostly for purposes of service delivery, and mostly in the form of shared information and funding.

10. This study sought, but found virtually no relationship between federal mandates for coordination and actual instances of coordination.

11. On the other hand, the study turned up little evidence that current federal coordination mandates per se work a hardship or have a negative effect on grantees.

12. Many federal requirements (other than coordination mandates) are heavily implicated in the perceived barriers to coordination. These include categorical funding, conflicting and restrictive eligibility rules, mismatched program cycles, mismatched reporting/monitoring requirements, and mismatched administrative procedures. Participants' perception of inter-program coordination at the federal level was relatively low.

13. Participants cite three types of barriers to improved coordination:

    (a) "turf" (categorical, special interest protection)

    (b) policy (especially eligibility restrictions)

    (c) organization (especially lack of staff and resources).

14. Barriers are heavily related to the issue of goal definition. Different interests yield different goals. Goals differ beacuase of categorical vs. generalist interests and because there are essentially four jurisdictional interests involved: federal, state, local government, and private service providers. Result: one person's coordination is another's taboo.

15. Study data shows inconsistent opinion as to whether the federal government should be more directive or less directive with regard to coordination.

Discussion of Findings

In the view of the study staff, the findings presented here are optimistic. They show local human services providers having considerable success "getting it together", serving people holistically, bringing a variety of resources to bear on human needs. They show substantial commitment to coordination (which means many different actions to different persons) and substantial desire for more coordination directed especially at improving service delivery.

Such positive events appear to be occurring; however, not because of federal activity, but despite the barriers to coordination in which the federal system is heavily implicated: the categorical funding and administrative system, the mismatched eligibility and program specifications eminating from federal law and policy. Despite a liberal scattering of exhortations, and even mandates, to coordination in federal statutes and regulations, there is very little clarity in federal rules as to which programs and agencies are tc be coordinated, what functions and activities are to be coordinated, and to what end. No special incentives are attached to federal coordination mandates in most programs, nor does much federal monitoring of coordination occur.

These findings, both positive and negative, are consistent with other recent studies conducted in Region X, and with at least two more evaluations under way in which preliminary findings have been made.*

Federal failure to resolve the complexity of the categorical system and failure to be very specific in what is to be done should not be generalized into the conclusion that no one knows what coordination is. Local service providers, in particular, mean by "coordination" a set of quite specific and quite understandable, concrete activities through which they can more efficiently and effectively bring multiple services to bear on multiple human needs.

Just because coordination activities are understandable rather than mysterious, they are not thereby simple nor necessarily compatible. Given differing goals of governmental and private jurisdictions, and of special interests versus generalist planners (both elected and non-elected), one person often wishes to standardize operations while another wishes to agree to differ, yet both can honestly say that they want to "coordinate" with each other.

Despite a measurable amount of jaded opinion about coordination (20%), negative attitudes are outweighed by a positive desire to improve coordination at the delivery level. Service deliverers are willing and eager to work on differing goals, believing that they can either reach agreement and thereby spread their resources further, or at least clarify their program boundaries and improve the access of clients across the program "fences". They want to work on substantive activities: sharing hard information about clients and services, and shared funding, rather than just having meetings. They want artificial barriers to coordination removed, including mismatched eligibility restrictions, mismatched cycles, and mismatched planning/reporting systems. Few believe any more that coordination is free; they want extra staff and technical assistance to achieve concrete results.

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* Ties That Bind, HEW National Planning Study, Region X, 1976.
People or Paper, HEW National Reporting/Monitoring Study, Region X, 1977.
Services to Migrants evaluation, Region X, now in process.
Deinstitutionalization evaluation, Region X, now in process.

The message for the federal government is mixed, mostly because service providers seldom understand whether the barriers to coordination arise from federal or state rules. There is no great outcry against federal coordination mandates; there is widespread conviction that federal mandates do little to promote coordination. The federal government should remove those barriers which are federal in origin and should not allow "middleman" grantees (States) to create new barriers. It should say what its coordination mandates mean in specific action terms when it makes them, and it should monitor and enforce its mandates. Finally, it should recognize that coordination is not free, and put some money where its mouth is.

Special Note on Federal "Distance"

The non-federal staff participating in this study were surprized to discover the hierarchical "distance" of the federal staff from the level of service delivery in most programs.

They noted that consolidated services agencies exist at the state and local level in many instances, acting as "middlemen" in the funding flow. In fact, 23 states* have what are called "mega-agencies", "umbrella agencies", or "Departments of Human Resources". The local deliverers of HEW-subsidized services are often local consolidated agencies - either local outlets of the State DHRs or service providers which contract with several HEW-funded programs. The researchers heard complaints about the prerogatives and influence of these consolidated state and local agencies on service delivery. They were inclined to conclude - though not with statistically acceptable date - that in the cases where such consolidated agencies exist, HEW can have little effect on delivery by issuing coordination mandates to these consolidated agencies.

This study did not produce data by which coordination in States with DHRs can be compared with coordination in States without DHRs.

Some data was developed, however, which supports the view that the federal distance from the delivery level is - at least, perceptually - quite large. Four out of twenty local agencies spending HEW funds (via State pass-through) did not know that they received HEW funds. The following table shows that HEWs role in service delivery is perceived as quite low.

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* Overview of Depts. of Human Resources, Gary Bowers for HEW-OS, June, 1977.

Table IV-1

Perception of HEWs Roles in Local Service Delivery Agency
As Reported by In-Person Participants

	Frequency	Percent
No HEW role	16	40
Limited Role:		
Indirect Funding	12	
Peripheral Info Dissemination	3	
Both: Some Indirect Funding & some Info Dissemination	3	
	18	45
Major Role:		
Major Funding	1	
Funding and Information	5	
	6	15
TOTAL	40	

The research staff experiencing these perceptions of consolidated "middlemen" and great federal distance tended toward global solutions such as increased federalization of programs or, alternatively, termination of federal efforts to effect coordination at all. However, this report supports neither of these extreme positions. Rather, it holds with the more moderate conclusion that incremental coordination improvements are possible within the federal/state/local system. That bias, or conservatism, should be recognized as such in the recommendations which follow.

Researchers wishing to draw stronger recommendations would, the authors believe, need better data on the relative impacts of consolidated state and local agencies than this study provides.

Study Recommendations:

1. The Office of the Secretary, HEW, should require and enforce an agency re-examination of all coordination requirements in HEW-administered statutes and regulations. All regulations should specify the functions, agencies, activities, and purposes of each coordination requirement. Monitoring of all specific coordination requirements should be scheduled and regularly accomplished.

2. State, local governments and private grantees and sub-grantees/contractors should be represented among participants in the reform process recommended above. All grantees, sub-grantees, and contractors under each program should receive - with comment opportunity - each coordination monitoring report.

3. HEW should vigorously pursue reform processes now underway to reduce artificial coordination barriers in the form of mismatched planning/funding cycles, mismatched reporting/monitoring requirements, and similar problems.

4. HEW should undertake serious study of eligibility interface between programs, directed not only at federal restrictions but at State variations on target groups, particularly in groups of programs viewed as most amenable to coordination, e.g., manpower-related programs, family health programs, etc. The purpose of such study should be simplified eligibility documentation and accounting, to allow more consolidated client intake systems.

5. HEW should identify and publicize a "coordination point of contact" in each regional office, accessible to both grantees and sub-grantees/ contractors, responsible for investigating reports of coordination barriers at both federal and state levels, recommending statute/policy change where needed, and shepherding waiver requests through the HEW bureaucracy.

6. Coordination should be formally recognized as a valid justification for special coordination incentive funding, with either new or existing HEW funds. Emphasis should be placed on delivery-level projects such as community resource files, information-referral systems, simplified client intake systems, and local services planning. Such coordination incentives should not be burdened with "innovation" or "research" strings, but should be publicized as implementation incentive funds.

Other Improvement Ideas:

1. HEW should fund a special study of "gaps in services", i.e., identifiable groups of persons who are frequently turned away from local human services agencies because they are not eligible. The purpose would be to determine where coordination is most needed, and where it will not suffice to fill a major human service need in the society. The study should include groups in which earlier detection or service might have prevented a later service demand, e.g., hearing-impaired children.

2. Changes in regulations for formula grant programs should be accompanied by substantial effort to involve sub-grantees and other local level providers in the regulation development effort. Information sharing workshops below the federal and state levels should be given more emphasis both before and after regulation promulgation.

3. Monitoring of coordination and other cross-program requirements should be assigned to generalist federal staff not tied to individual programs. Substantial cross-program policy problems would be more effectively surfaced by a non-categorical monitoring staff.

4. Technical assistance should be made available by regional personnel to help agencies with limited staff, such as small school districts, to participate in any special coordination funding.

5. Tie incentive funds for coordination into the matching funds reimbursement by having an additional percentage of coordination funds available at the discretion of the regional office, if cross-program monitoring shows that coordination, more than just program services, have been delivered. Numbers of documented successful referrals or clients whose multiple needs have been served should be taken into account in dispensing these funds.

6. There currently exist library cataloging systems (e.g., SHARE, ERIC, Policy Source Book for Social Programs) which can make available to policy makers, study staff, and grant developers, bibliographies on information concerning and analyses of particular subjects. Policy makers and researchers should be strongly encouraged to use these systems and to participate in their updating.